

REMARKS

Upon entry of the Amendment, Claim 5 will be pending in the application. Claim 2 is canceled, and Claims 1, 3 and 4 were previously canceled.

Claim 5 was previously amended under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 on February 14, 2004, and then further amended under 37 C.F.R. § 1.114(c), on March 2, 2004.

The Examiner points out that Applicants' RCE application appears to have both entered the after final rejection amendment (which was proposed but not entered in the Advisory Action mailed February 20, 2004) as well as the most recent amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.114(c) filed March 2, 2004, with the resultant effect being that the pending claims assertedly contain a significant number of serious informalities.

The Examiner proposes revising Applicants' latest submitted Claim 5 with the Claim 5 that was presented in the response filed June 26, 2003, and restated on page 3 of the Office Action.

In order to advance prosecution and clarify and remove any perceived confusion regarding Claim 5, Applicants accept the Examiner's suggestion to use the claim on page 3 of the Office Action in place of Claim 5. Applicants adopt the Examiner's suggested base claim and further amend the base claim as indicated.

That is, Claim 5 is amended to recite "obtained polymer" based on support, for example, in the reference examples. Reference Example 1 describes "... to obtain a polymer of Reference Example 1. This polymer had ..." (page 15, lines 23-25). Claim 5 is also amended to incorporate the subject matter of Claim 2, now canceled. No new matter is added.

Entry of the Amendment is respectfully requested along with reconsideration and review of the claims on the merits.

Rejection of Claims Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 2 and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as containing new matter, particularly the word “final” to characterize “polymer”.

Applicants respond as follows.

The base Claim 5 proposed by the Examiner and adopted herein removes reference to a “final polymer”. Claim 2 is canceled, making the rejection of this claim moot.

Further, Applicants amend Claim 5 to recite “obtained polymer” in place of the previous amendment and argument directed to “final polymer”.

Applicants respectfully submit that the term “obtained polymer” in Claim 5 is fully described in the specification as indicated above, is not new matter, and is in accordance with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph.

Rejection of Claims Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 2 and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as assertedly being unpatentable over EP ‘470 taken in view of Applicants’ alleged admissions in the specification regarding the usage of pressure sensitive adhesive sheets in semiconductor processing operations, substantially for the reasons of record.

Claim 2 is canceled, making the rejection of this claim moot.

Applicants traverse this rejection as follows.

The present invention measures the molecular weight of the obtained polymer at the end of the reaction to determine the content of low molecular weight components. It is clear from the disclosure that Applicants' claim a weight-average molecular weight range based on obtained polymers versus EP '470 disclosure of pre-reaction acrylic copolymers having a number average molecular weight range of 100,000 to 500,000.

Furthermore, Claim 5 now incorporates the additional subject matter of Claim 2 where the obtained polymer is an acrylic polymer obtained by polymerizing one or more monomers in liquid or supercritical carbon dioxide. Applicants point to the specification on page 8, last line to page 9, line 14 of the specification which states the following important benefits of using carbon dioxide:

"The use of carbon dioxide as a diluent not only is effective in keeping the system at a low viscosity throughout the polymerization due to its diluting effect to improve the efficiency of stirring, but also inhibits radical chain transfer. Because of this, a high-molecular polymer is obtained which has a lower content of low-molecular components than conventional polymers synthesized with organic solvents. Consequently, by using such a polymer as an adhesive base polymer, a pressure-sensitive adhesive can be obtained which is excellent in both cohesive force and adhesive strength and is reduced in the fouling of adherends."

Applicants respectfully submit that nothing in EP '470 or any other cited reference discloses or suggests individually or in combination thereof at least an *obtained* polymer with a weight average molecular weight of 930,000 to 2,100,000 and the additional element that the obtained polymer is an acrylic polymer obtained by polymerizing one or more monomers in

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liquid or supercritical carbon dioxide (from Claim 2). Further neither EP '470 nor any other art teach or suggest the above-quoted benefits and advantages obtained when polymerization takes place in liquid or superficial CO₂.

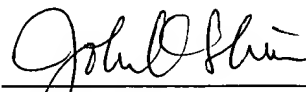
Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) and allowance of Claim 5.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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CUSTOMER NUMBER

Date: August 4, 2004